

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 VIENTI 06405 01 OF 02 171518Z

44

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-13 OMB-01 DPW-01 AID-20 EUR-25

DRC-01 NEA-10 SAJ-01 /177 W
----- 113754

R 171205Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5879
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY SAIGON
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 6405

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

BEGIN SUMMARY: LAO LOCAL REACTION TO SIGNATURE WAS UNIFORMLY POSITIVE, WHETHER FROM MEDIA, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEPUTIES OR RLG ARMED FORCES (FAR) GENERAL STAFF. ONLY SOUR NOTE WAS CARPING OBJECTION FROM EXILED LAO LEADER PHOUMI NOSAVAN, WHO COMPLAINED THAT LAO WERE FORCED TO SIGN AGREEMENT THEY OPPOSED. TO GREATER EXTENT THAN AFTER SIGNING OF FEBRUARY AGREEMENT, LPF RADIO AND FOREIGN COMMUNIST MEDIA STRESSED REUNIFICATION THEME, PERHAPS TO AVOID CRITICISM OF PREVIOUS COMMUNIST LINE THAT AGREEMENT CREATED "TWO ZONES, TWO ADMINISTRATIONS," IMPLYING PARTITIONS OF LAOS. ONLY RADIO HANOI PLAYED UP STATUS OF LPF "LIBERATED ZONE" COVERING "FOUR-FIFTHS OF LAOS AND SERVING AS SYMBOL FOR LAOS OF THE FUTURE." USG WAS WIDELY APPLAUDED FOR HAVING LETTER OF CONGRATULATIONS SIGNED BY PRESIDENT NIXON READY TO DELIVER ON SEPTEMBER 14; IN CONTRAST, SKIMPY FRENCH FOUR-LINE CONGRATUATORY TELEGRAM DREW SOME CRITICISM. THAI CONGRATULATIONS NOT YET PRINTED, NOR ANY FROM PEKING OR MOSCOW, ALTHOUGH BOTH SYYRT GREETED SIGNING WITH FAVORABLE BROADCAST EDITORIALS, RELATIVELY DEVOID OF ANTI-US
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 VIENTI 06405 01 OF 02 171518Z

PROPAGANDA. DRV MESSAGES WERE LONGEST AND MOST EFFUSIVE

TO LPF CHA RMAN SOUPHANOUVONG AND "PATRIOTIC NEUTRALIST" NON-ENTITY KHAMSOUK KEOLA; DRV MESSAGE TO SOUVANNA, IN CONTRAST, WAS ALMOST INSULTINGLY SHORT AND BLAND. IN WAKE OF WIDESPREAD FAVORABLE REACTION, SOUVANNA IS EXPECTED TO HAVE LITTLE DIFFICULTY SECURING NATIONAL ASSEMBLY APPROVAL FOR AGREEMENT, PROTOCOL AND CABINET RESHUFFLE BY WHICH HE WILL EFFECT FORMATION OF NEW PGNU. END SUMMARY

I. VIENTIANE - LOCAL REACTION

1. BOTH OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL VIENTIANE MEDIA COMMENTATORS WERE EFFUSIVELY FAVORABLE. EDITORIAL IN LAO PRESSE, SEPTEMBER 14, SAID PROTOCOL CLOSED "DRAMATIC CHAPTER IN KINGDOM'S HISTORY" (I.E., ENDED WAR) AND LAID GROUNDWORK FOR NATIONAL RECONCILIATION. EDITORIAL PREDICTED THAT GOOD WILL WHICH MARKED ATER STAGES OF NEGOTIATIONS WOULD HELP OVERCOME FUTURE PROBLEMS AND THUS FINALLY HELP EXTINGUISH FLAMES OF WAR THROUGHT INDOCHINA. VIENTIANE DAILY SIENG SERI, WHICH IS INFLUENCED BY MILITARY REGION II COMMANDING GENERAL VANG PAO, STRONGLY APPLAUDED SIGNATURE OF PROTOCOL AND CALLED UPON "ALL LAO TO FORGET ERRORS OF THE PAST" AND UNITE TO "RESIST FOREIGN SUBVERSIVE PROPAGANDA HARMFUL TO LAO NATIONAL INTERESTS AND UNITY." VIENTIANE'S OTHER MAJOR DAILY, THE STRONGLY ANTI-COMMUNIST XAT LAO, STATED EDITORIALY THAT "ALTHOUGH SOME PEOPLE ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH TERMS OF AGREEMENT...THING TO DO NOW IS APPLY THEM SCRUPULOUSLY, NOT TRY TO MANEUVER AROUND THEM." XAT LAO ALSO PLAYED UP THEME OF FOREIGN INTERFERENCE, CALLING UPON NOT ONLY PATHET LAO BUT "ALL POLITICAL TENDENCIES TO DISENGAGE THEMSELVES FROM FORIEGN INFLUENCE." OVER WEEKEND, ALL VIENTIANE PAPERS WERE PREOCCUPIED WITH SEVERAL PROSPECTIVE CABINET LISTS FOR NEW PGNU, WHICH ARE ALSO BEING CIRCULATED WIDELY. THESE LISTS SUGGEST THAT AGREEMENT HAS LARGELY BEEN REACHED ON INCUMBENTS OF 20 OF THE 25 SEATS IN NEW GOVERNMENT, WITH ONLY "QUALIFIED NEUTRAL" MINISTRIES STILL UNDETERMINED. HOWEVER, NO PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT ON THIS SUBJECT HAS YET BEEN MADE. LAO PRESSE, SEPTEMBER 17, CARRIED MESSAGE FROM KING TO SOUVANNA WHICH READ: "WE ARE HAPPY TO LEARN FINALLY OF SIGNATURE OF THE PROTOCOL, CRYSTALLIZING THE FEBRUARY 21 AGREEMENT. WE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 VIENTI 06405 01 OF 02 171518Z

ARDENTLY HOPE THAT NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WILL BE ACHIEVED TO SATISFACTION OF ALL LAO. A NEW ERA OF WORK FOR PROSPERITY AND HAPPINESS IS NOW OPEN." KING'S MESSAGE PLACES HIS SEAL OF APPROVAL ON AGREEMENT AND PROTOCOL AND WILL FACILITATE SOUVANNA'S MAINTENANCE OF PRESENT CONSENSUS.

2. FAR COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GENERAL BOUNPONE AND NINE OTHER TOP FAR GENERALS HELD PRESS CONFERENCE SATURDAY

MORNING (SEPTEMBER 15), RESULTS OF WHICH APPEARED IN BANGKOK NEWSPAPERS BUT NOT YET IN VIENTIANE MEDIA. BANGKOK PRESS ACCOUNTS SUGGESTED THIS CONFERENCE WAS CRITICAL OF PROTOCOL. HOWEVER, EMBASSY SOURCE WHO WAS PRESENT INDICATED THAT BOUNPONE ENDORSED SIGNATURE OF PROTOCOL BUT DEPICTED IT COURIOUSLY AS OPENING WAY FOR REUNIFICATION OF "ALL LAO BROTHERS IN STRUGGLE AGAINST NORTH VIETNAMESE." ALSO PRESENT AT PRESS CONFERENCE WIRE TWO FORMER LPF OFFICERS (RALLIERS FROM 1971) WHO ECHOED BOUNPONE'S LINE.

3. LOCAL JOURNAL VIENTIANE POST CARRIED COMMENT FROM NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEPUTY SALAT RASASAK (SARAVANE PROVINCE) TO EFFECT THTT "ONE ONE PERCENT OF LAO PEOPLE, THOSE WHOSE PERSONAL INTERESTS BENEFITTED FROM WAR, OPPOSE PROTOCOL." SIMILARLY, OTHER DEPUTIES WITH WHOM WE SPOKE THIS MORNING INDICATED THAT THERE IS LITTLE REASON TO EXPECT AT THIS TIME THAT ASSEMBLY WOULD OR CAN CAUSE TROUBLE IN APPROVING THE AGREEMENT/PROTOCOL OR RESHUFFLE OF CABINET WHEN SOUVANNA PRESENTS THEM TO THE DEPUTIES. SEVERAL MEMBERS SAID THAT SCALE-DOWN OF FIGHTING, AND GRADUAL RESUMPTION OF FAMILY AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN BOTH ZONES WHICH HAS OCCURRED IN PAST SEVEN MONTHS, HAS PROMOTED WITH CONSENSUS OF SUPPORT FOR AGREEMENT AND PROTOCOL WITH THEIR CONSTITUENTS. ONLY RESERVATION EXPRESSED WAS FEAR THAT ROG MAY NAME FORMER MINISTERS AND DEPUTIES, I.E., AGING POLITICAL HACKS, TO JNPC, WHILE LPF WILL PROBABLY APPOINT BRIGHT, VIGOROUS COMMUNIST POLITICANS,

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 VIENTI 06405 02 OF 02 180442Z

16

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-13 OMB-01 DPW-01 AID-20 EUR-25

NEA-10 SAJ-01 DRC-01 /177 W

----- 119771

R 171205Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5880
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY SAIGON
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 VIENTIANE 6405

AND THUS EASILY GAIN CONTROL OF BODY WHICH IS TO PLAY
KEY ROLE IN ORGANIZING ELECTIONS FOR NEXT ASSEMBLY. NGON
SANAİKONE, WHOSE BROTHER PHOUİ IS MOST INFLUENTIAL FIGURE IN
ASSEMBLY, AND WHO HELD OUT LONGEST AGAINST SIGNATURE TOLD PRESS HE
WELCOMED PROTOCOL AND THOUGHT IT WOULD GIVE NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT
BETTER-THAN-AVERAGE CHANCE OF SURVIVAL.

4. ONLY SOUR NOTE WAS STRUCK BY STATEMENT TO AFP BY EXILED
LEADER PHOUMI NOSAVAN IN BANGKOK, THAT "HE IS STRONGLY
OPPOSED TO SIGNATURE OF AGREEMENT", AS ARE "MOST MILITARY
OFFICER AND LAO PEOPLE WHO WERE FORCED INTO ACCEPTING IT."

II. LPF REACTION

5. RADIO PATHET LAO ISSUED LRGE VOLUME OF PROPAGANDA ON
OCCASION OF THE SIGNATURE. MOST SIGNIFICANT WERE APPEALS
FROM LPF CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND FROM COMMUNIST ARMED FORCES
(LPLA). THESE DESCRIBED SIGNATURE AS "SEVERE DEFEAT FOR
U.S. IMPERIALISTS" AND "SANANIKONE REACTIONARY CLIQUE"
AND SINGLED OUT PROVISION THAT LPLA TROOPS WOULD PROVIDE
SECURITY FOR LPF "LEADING CADRES" IN PGNU AS MAJOR STEP
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 VIENTI 06405 02 OF 02 180442Z

FORWARD INDICATING EFFORTS AT NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WILL
WORK BETTER THIS TIME THAN IN 1962. CENTRAL COMMITTEE
APPEAL EMPHASIZED THAT LPF HAD MADE MANY COMPROMISES TO
SECURE SIGNATURE BUT THAT ALL LAO SHOULD NOW FORGET THE
PAST AND JOIN TOGETHER TO PROMOTE NATIONAL REUNIFICATION.
THEME OF REUNIFICATION WAS STRESSED FAR MORE STRONGLY THAN
IN LPF PROPANDA WHICH FOLLOWED SIGNATURE OF FEBRUARY
AGREEMENT, WHEN LPF WAS STILL STRESSING LINE OF "TWO
ZONES, TWO ADMINISTRATIONS" THAT IMPLIED DE FACTO PARTITION
OF LAOS. MOST INTERESTING POINT IN LPLA APPEAL WAS
DIRECTIVE TO THOSE LPLA TROOPS WHO ARE TO BE STATIONED
IN VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG TO "OBEY LPF REGULATIONS"
AND "SINCERELY COOPERATE" WITH OPPOSITE SIDE IN PROMOTING
SECURITY FOR PGNU AND LPF LEADERS. LPF MAY BE CONCERNED
ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF DEFECTION, SINCE 52 OF ITS ORIGINAL
100-MAY FORCE, SENT TO VIENTIANE TO GUARD ITS MINISTERS IN
1962, EVENTUALLY DEFECTED.

III. FOREIGN REACTION

6. THE FOLLOWING COUNTRIES HAVE, SO FAR, HAD CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE PRINTED IN LAO PRESSE OR HAVE COMMENTED ON THE SIGNATURE (IN TERMS INDICATED) OVER THEIR NATIONAL RADIOS:

A) USA: LAO LEADERS WERE PARTICULARLY GRATIFIED AND COMMENTED THAT U.S. WAS ONLY POWER WHICH HANDED SOUVANNA A SIGNED LETTER FROM CHIEF OF STATE RATHER THAN TELEGRAM. IN ARCANE WORLD OF VIENTIANE DIPLOMATIC ONE-UP-MANSHIP, THIS WAS A MINOR COUP.

B) FRANCE: IN CONTRAST, BOTH SOUVANNA AND HIS CHIEF MINISTERS WERE RATHER PIQUED THAT POMPIDOU SENT ONLY FOUR LINES OF TELEGRAPHIC CONGRATULATIONS (POMPIDOU'S STATE VISIT TO THE PRC PROBABLY COMPLICATED MATTERS).

C) USSR: RADIO MOSCOW BROADCAST BRIEF FAVORABLE COMMENTARY BUT NO SOVIET CONGRATULATION HAS YET BEEN PUBLISHED. SOVIET BROADCAST STRESSED NATIONAL REUNIFICATION THEME, TOOK NO SWINGS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 VIENTI 06405 02 OF 02 180442Z

AT USG, BUT COURIOUSLY REFERRED TO SOUPHANOUVONG AS DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER "EX OFICIO" IN NEW PGNU.

D) JAPAN: MESSAGE FROM TANAKA PUBLISHED IN LAO PRESSE WELCOMED FORMATION OF "NEW GOVERNMENT" AND PROMISED "NEW EFFORTS TO PROVIDE IMPORTANT ASSISTANCE IN VARIOUS FIELDS." REFERENCE TO FORMATION OF "NEW GOVERNMENT" MAY NOT BE HELPFUL, SINCE SOUVANNA IS TRYING TO DEPICT FORMATION AS "SIMPLE RESHUFFLE" TO ALLOY POSSIBLE CONSTITUTIONAL OBJECTIONS FROM THE KING.

E) UK: UNEXCEPTIONAL MESSAGE PUBLISHED IN LAO PRESSE DID NOT MENTION BRITISH ROLE AS CO-CHAIRMAN BUT EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE OF IMPLEMENTING ARTICLE 4 OF VIENTIANE FEBRUARY AGREEMENT (FOREIGN TROOP WITHDRAWAL).

F) INDIA: OFFICIAL INDIAN STATEMENT DID NOT APPLAUD SOUVANNA BUT INSTEAD PRAISED "WISDOM AND STATE-MANSHIP ON BOTH SIDES," THUS IN EFFECT ECHOING STANDARD INDIAN ATTITUDE ON LAOS THAT NO ICC ACTIVITIES CAN BE CONDUCTED WITHOUT APPROVAL BY LPF SIDE.

G) AUSTRALIA: ONLY INTERESTING FEATURE OF AUSTRALIAN STATEMENT WAS CALL FOR NEW DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN LAO AND AUSTRALIAN REPRESENTATIVES ON ECONOMIC

ASSISTANCE.

H) PRC: ALTHOUGH CHOU EN-LAI SENT ONE OF THE FIRST CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES TO SOUVANNA AFTER FEBRUARY AGREEMENT SIGNED, AND, IN FACT, USED SOUVANNA'S TITLE OF PRIME MINISTER IN THAT MESSAGE FOR FIRST TIME IN SEVEN YEARS, NO CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE FROM PEKING ON PRESENT PROTOCOL HAS APPARENTLY YET APPEARED. HOWEVER, PEOPLES' DAILY EDITORIAL, SEPTEMBER 15, OFFERED WARM WELCOME AND CONTRATULATIONS ON SIGNATURE OF PROTOCOL, CALLING IT "TREMENDOUS ACHIEVEMENT" AND AVOIDING ANTI-AMERICAN PROPAGANDA.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 VIENTI 06405 02 OF 02 180442Z

I) DRV: RADIO HANOI BROADCAST LARGEST VOLUME OF PROPAGANDA ABOUT SINATURE OF ANY INTERESTED PARTY, DESCRIBING SIGNATURE AS "/HISTORIC VICTORY OF LAO PEOPLE OVER U.S. IMPERIALISTS." DRV SENT FOUR CONGRATUATORY MESSAGES TO LAO LEADERS, AND DIFFERENCES AMONG THEM ARE INTERESTING. LPF CHAIRMAN SOUPHANOUVONG RECEIVED 39 LINES OF CONGRATUATIONS FROM TON DUC THANG, WHO SIGNED AS "PRESIDENT OF DRV AND CHAIRMAN OF VIETNAM FATHERLAND FRONT." KHOUMSOUK KEOLA (HEAD OF FICTIONAL "PATRIOTIC NEUTRAILST FORCES") SURPRISINGLY RECEIVED 25 LINES OF CONGRATULATIONS FROM TON DUC THANG, WHO SIGNED IN CAPACITY AS CHAIRMAN OF VIENTNAM FATHERLAND FRONT. KING OF LAOS RECEIVED ONLY 16 LINES FROM TON DUC THANG, WHO SIGNED AS PRESIDENT OF DRV. IN CONTRAST, SOUVANNA PHOUMA HIMSELF RECEIVED ONLY NINE LINES OF CONGRATULATIONS FROM PHAM VAN DONG, WHO SIGNED AS PREMIER OF DRV. WHY KHOUMSOUK KEOLA WAS SINGLED OUT AND GIVEN STATUS ALMOST EQUAL TO THAT OF SOUPHANOUVONG BY THE DEV IS SOMETHING OF A MYSTERY.
WHITEHOUSE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMISTICE, PRESS COMMENTS, POLITICAL SITUATION, POLITICAL LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 SEP 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: collinp0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973VIENTI06405
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS WHITEHOUSE
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: VIENTIANE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730929/aaaaauwc.tel
Line Count: 321
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: collinp0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03-Dec-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <01 MAR 2002 by collinp0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LAO REACTION TO SIGNATURE
TAGS: PFOR, VN, VS, (NOSAVAN, PHOUMI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005